



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

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## AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT

This article has been written with information obtained from the Australian Institute of Sport.

### INTRODUCTION

The Government established the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) at the National Sports Centre in Canberra in January 1981. Canberra, the National Capital, is a modern garden city of light and space and as such provides an ideal location for an establishment such as an institute of sport.

The Institute aims to provide Australian athletes with:

- A very high level of coaching and intensive training, together with attractive educational opportunities and ancillary benefits;
- World class facilities and equipment with sports medicine and sports science back-ups; and
- Adequate domestic and overseas travel to enable them to participate in necessary high level competitions.

Prior to the establishment of the AIS, most of Australia's leading and promising athletes lacked the opportunity to train under top level coaches or to receive assistance with their travel to important competitions. Also, they lacked the use of satisfactory facilities and equipment. These deficiencies were most apparent with athletes living in country areas who usually trained in isolation and had little access to up-to-date training methods and to the sharing of ideas and experiences.

Many Australian athletes had to choose between advancing their sport or pursuing a career. As a result, a large proportion of leading and promising athletes gave up training and competition, while others left Australia to further their sporting activities by gaining access to up-to-date opportunities available in the United States of America. Also Australia lagged behind many other countries in the field of sports medicine and sports science.

### THE INSTITUTE

Presently 200 of Australia's elite young sports people are training at the institute under 26 world class coaches.

These athletes are living at the Australian National University and are either attending university, college, high school, or are working while training at the Institute.

Scholarships have been provided for all 200 students and it is envisaged that there will eventually be 300 athletes attending the Institute.

The eight sports presently represented at the Institute are: athletics, basketball, gymnastics, netball, soccer, swimming, tennis and weight lifting.

As part of the Institute's decentralisation program, men's and women's field hockey becomes the ninth sport discipline to enter the AIS arena, at Perth, Western Australia, in February 1984.

The Institute is managed by a Board of Management chaired by Mr Kevan Gosper. Board Members include Professor John Bloomfield (Deputy Chairman), Mr John Cheadle, Dr John A. Daly, Mr Paul Brettell, Mr Bruce MacDonald, Mr Mike Wenden, Mr Geoff Pollard and Ms Libby Darlison.

## **FACILITIES**

During the first year of the Institute's operation (1981) athletes used the facilities of the National Sports Centre which consisted of a track and field stadium, an indoor sports centre, and outdoor tennis and netball courts.

Over the 1982-83 period the Institute has seen the building and opening of new world class facilities including:

- a gymnastics training hall
- an indoor tennis hall (4 courts)
- an aquatic centre with an 8-lane 50 metre pool
- a short sprint 25 metre pool.

1984 sees the opening of:

- an indoor basketball/netball facility
- a weight lifting hall and theatre
- an indoor soccer training hall and outdoor synthetic pitch.

## **SELECTION**

Scholarships are advertised nationally, inviting applications from athletes who have obtained a certain level of performance in any of the eight sport disciplines.

After consultation between the Head Coaches at the AIS and the national body controlling each sport, successful athletes are advised of their scholarships in December and arrive in January the following year to pursue their athletic goals.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Institute offers either full or part time scholarships to successful athletes. The scholarships comprise the following:

### Full Scholarship:

- Board and quarters
- Travel to and from Canberra
- Education expenses to the value of \$250
- Travel in Canberra (bus pass)
- Free medical supervision

### Part Scholarship:

- Board and quarters
- Free medical supervision

All athletes are entitled to top class coaching, world class facilities, competition and training gear and equipment, laundering of training and competition gear, competition costs (interstate and overseas) and all back-up services (e.g. administrative and sports science).

## **ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES EDUCATION**

The AIS provides attractive educational opportunities in cooperation with the following institutions:

The Australian National University  
Canberra College of Advanced Education  
Bruce College of Technical and Further Education  
Canberra College of Technical and Further Education  
Dickson College  
Lyneham High School.

## **Billeting**

Scholarship holders under the age of 16 years are placed with Canberra families as close as possible to the AIS.

## **Married Athletes**

Married athletes receive a rent subsidy and find their own accommodation. Consideration is also given to requests by senior un-married athletes who wish to find their own accommodation.

## **Marketing of the Australian Institute of Sport**

Although funds for the Australian Institute of Sport capital and yearly running costs are provided by the Federal Government, the AIS still needs corporate involvement. The Institute is seeking to finance up to 10% of yearly running costs through a corporate marketing program which gives companies, large and small, an opportunity to become involved with the Australian Institute of Sport.

The program offers companies the chance to sponsor Institute teams or individuals in return for

the benefit of having their product publicised in various ways by Australia's top athletes (see details below).

Companies can become involved with the Australian Institute of Sport in a number of ways. The marketing program has been devised to offer opportunities in the following areas:

### **Sponsorship of Institute Teams**

There are a number of teams at the Australian Institute of Sport which require sponsorship. The company can gain benefit in the following ways:

- Teams wearing company logo on their competition tracksuits and, in some cases, clothing
- Advertising on team brochures
- Use of the AIS symbol for promotional activity
- Editorial mention in newsletters and reports
- AIS hospitality and presentations
- By Government and public relations opportunities
- Sponsorship of one of the Institute teams is \$30,000 per year.

### **Partial Subsidising of Scholarships**

It presently costs \$18,500 to keep an athlete at the Institute for one year. The Australian Institute of Sport is looking for companies to provide \$6,500 towards the cost of these scholarships. Scholarship can be presented to either a team or the Institute in general and will carry company identification.

Companies offering this contribution towards scholarship costs will also be promoted along similar lines to those sponsoring Institute teams.

## **THE FUTURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT**

The creation of the AIS has been a big step forward in the advancement of sport in Australia. The next step will be to develop the AIS substantially so that it is commensurate with other countries (there are 50 Institutes of Sport in West Germany, 3 in India, many in Eastern European countries - most of these are of a very high standard).

Government support for the AIS has ensured the Institute's future and the next few years will see exciting developments in Australian sport.

At the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in 1982 the Institute athletes, as members of the Australian team, indicated just how profitable 18 months of intensive training and back-up can be. The Institute's athletes broke many Commonwealth and national records and contributed substantially to Australia's overall medal tally.

The performance of Institute members Robert de Castella in the marathon and triple gold medallist Lisa Curry in the swimming events were memorable highlights of the Commonwealth Games.

Australia's big test in the international arena will undoubtedly be the Los Angeles Olympics this year and all Australians will keenly watch the results of these Games.

However, as the AIS has been established for only a few years, it would be unrealistic to expect

Australian athletes at the Los Angeles Olympics to achieve world standard in the various sport disciplines and bring home a host of gold medals. It took West Germany 16 years before its athletes from their Institutes of Sport gained prominence at top class international competitions, and it would be to optimistic to expect Australian athletes to accomplish the same feat in some 3 years.

What will be achieved through the existence of the AIS, will be considerable improvements in Australia's world ranking and a host of "personal best" performances by Australia's athletes.

The Australian Institute of Sport will enable Australia to again become a force to be reckoned with in the international world of sport - thanks to the foresight and continued funding and support of the Australian Government and sponsors.

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